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# The role of socio-economic status in determining voting behavior in Richmond, Virginia

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THE ROLE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS  
IN DETERMINING VOTING BEHAVIOR  
IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

BY

ARTHUR HENRY VERBURG

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND  
IN CANDIDACY  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS  
IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

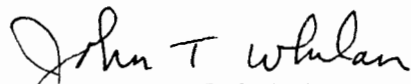
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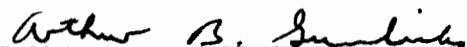
THE ROLE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS IN DETERMINING  
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Arthur H. Verburg

Richmond, Virginia

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## INTRODUCTION

The question as to why an individual votes as he does has been a much-researched and frequently debated source of inquiry. Many scholars over the years have examined the question from different approaches, utilizing a variety of data, and have arrived at several different answers. In this paper I will explore one such answer: the role of socio-economic status (SES). The area of study will be the City of Richmond, Virginia, during the years 1968-1973.

Chapter I, Review of Literature, summarizes the major schools of thought surrounding the "why" of voting behavior. The first school is the Sociological School, often referred to as the Columbia School. It is so called because its most notable advocates came from Columbia University. This school contends that an individual's socio-economic status determines his or her voting response. Put simply, if one is a member of the lower status, he votes a certain way. If one is a member of the upper status, he votes a different way. The second school is the Psychological School, sometimes referred to as the Michigan School. This school is so called because its major advocates came from the Michigan faculty. The people that embrace this line of thought contend that a person's vote is the result, not of his class, but of his psychological evaluation of the election forces surrounding him, i.e., political parties, issues, candidates.



Chapter II, Methodology, provides the framework for this study. Contained in it are the actual hypotheses to be tested, the definitions and assumptions used, the types of data employed, and the procedures for analysis. Chapter III, Results, presents the apparent answers to the questions posed in Chapter II. The final Chapter, Conclusions, will summarize all findings and place this study in its proper perspective.

## CHAPTER I

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As was noted in the Introduction, voting behavior research can be categorized into two prominent schools of thought, the Sociological School and the Psychological School. These emerged at different times in history and took quite different approaches as to the "why" of voting behavior. In this chapter we will discuss the major ideas of each school and cite several representative works.

#### The Sociological School

The sociological school was the first to emerge. It appeared at a time when the New Deal Coalition between the Democratic Party and the poor, minorities, and the laborers was still pronounced. Franklin Roosevelt had championed their cause in the 1930's and the bond was still quite strong. The supporters of this school contended that one's socio-economic status determined his or her voting behavior. They cited many components of SES which they felt accounted for a large percentage of the variance of voting behavior. The components included such items as race, ethnic background, age, occupation, income, religion, and residence (inner city, suburban, rural). Also studied was the relationship of education to voting behavior. While it may not be a direct component of SES, it is

directly related to it. Bernard Berelson, Paul Lazarsfeld, and William McPhee, will be the first authors discussed.

These three scholars studied the 1948 Presidential election results in the town of Elmira, New York. Their results were published in 1954 in their book entitled, Voting: A Study Of Opinion Formation In A Presidential Campaign. They examined what they felt were the three major types of political cleavage: (1) occupational, income, and status cleavages, (2) religious, racial, and ethnic cleavages, and (3) regional and urban-rural cleavages.<sup>1</sup> Occupation correlated positively with voter preference; businessmen voted Republican, laborers voted Democratic.<sup>2</sup> Religion, primarily Catholicism, correlated positively with Democratic preference: "Regardless of socio-economic status level or age or even political attitude, Catholics vote more Democratic than do Protestants."<sup>3</sup> With regard to racial minorities, a positive correlation with Demo-

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation In A Presidential Campaign. (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 54.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 55-57.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

cratic preference was obtained and became even stronger as the ties to the minority group become stronger.<sup>4</sup>

Nicholas Masters and Deil Wright studied voting trends in Michigan in the late 1950's and found a similar connection between socio-economic status and voting behavior. Their linear correlations revealed that within the cities, occupational classifications accounted for a substantial amount of variance; Democratic vote and percent of laborers correlated +0.68, whereas Republican vote and percent of managers correlated +0.77.<sup>5</sup> Such correlation coefficients do suggest some rather strong relationships. Indeed, their studies revealed a close and open association of organized labor with the Democratic Party.<sup>6</sup>

Another study of the social processes which underly voting behavior was done by R. Duncan Luce in the late 1950's. He contended that interactions with members of primary groups are the basic social mechanisms for developing political decisions.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 70-72.

<sup>5</sup>Nicholas A. Masters and Deil S. Wright, "Trends and Variations In The Two-Party Vote: The Case of Michigan", American Political Science Review, LII (December, 1958), 1087.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 1085.

<sup>7</sup>R. Duncan Luce, "Analyzing The Social Process Underlying Group Voting Patterns", American Voting Behavior, ed. by Eugene Burdick and Arthur Brodbeck (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1959), p. 333.

Therefore, since socio-economic status is a basis for membership in certain primary groups, it will affect voting behavior. According to Luce, "... social classification should be a part of the input data which, with whatever other data appear relevant, lead to a prediction of voting behavior."<sup>8</sup>

The year 1960 saw the publication of another attempt to link SES and voting behavior. The book was Political Man: The Social Bases Of Politics, by Seymour Martin Lipset. His is a study of the sociology of politics. He concluded that "in every modern democracy conflict among different groups is expressed through political parties which basically represent a 'democratic translation of the class struggle!'"<sup>9</sup> "More than anything else the party struggle is a conflict among classes."<sup>10</sup> He cites polling studies since 1936 which show that the percent of people voting Democratic increases sharply as one moves down the occupational/income ladder. His figures are reproduced in the table below.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 332.

<sup>9</sup>Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man: The Social Bases Of Politics (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), p. 230.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 303.

Table 1

Percent Republican Voting or Voting Preference  
Among Occupational Groups and Trade-Union Members

	<u>1940</u>	<u>1948</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1956</u>
Business and Professional	64	77	64	61	68
White-collar Workers	52	48	60	52	63
Manual Workers (skilled & unskilled)	35	22	45	35	50
Farmers	46	32	67	56	54
Trade-Union Members	28	13	39	27	43

Further support for the view that SES is related to voting behavior came from the results of a Gallup Poll conducted just prior to the 1958 congressional elections. Respondents constructed images of typical party support. Democrats were pictured as middle class, common people, a friend, an ordinary person, someone who works for his wages, an average person. Republicans were pictured as well-to-do, big businessmen, wealthy, a money voter, higher class.<sup>12</sup> For Lipset, "...the most impressive single fact about political party support is that in virtually every economically developed country the lower-income groups vote mainly for parties of the left, while the higher-income groups vote mainly for parties of the right".<sup>13</sup> By left, he is referring to parties which represent

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 305.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 234.

themselves as advocating social change in the direction of equality.<sup>14</sup>

He does, however, point out one major exception. "Regionalism--the Democratic control of the South and the traditional Republican domination of many northern states--represents one important deviation, but a disappearing one, from the class basis of American politics."<sup>15</sup> This continual domination of one party reduces the spirit and enthusiasm of the opposition minority party. In fact, because "...the sole road to an effective political career lies in the Republican Party in a number of northern states, and the Democratic party in the South, many ambitious liberals in states like North Dakota or Vermont become active Republicans, while in the South right-wing conservatives choose the Democratic road to office."<sup>16</sup> Since Richmond, Virginia was the capital of the South during the Civil War, it will be interesting to see if this situation exists during the time period and the elections under study.

Two other authors who embrace the sociological school of thought are David Segal and Marshall Meyer. They conclude that man is a social animal for which "between the individual and the society of which he is a member, there exists a multitude of primary and social groupings that define his place in the social

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 322.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 324.

order and demand certain behaviors of him."<sup>17</sup> The pressures of these groupings are translated into particular votes. Segal and Meyer contend that "surveys of national samples of the electorate have consistently shown that, although there were regional differences, people of high socio-economic status tend to support the Republican party, and persons of low socio-economic status tend to support the Democratic party."<sup>18</sup>

Another study supporting the importance of SES appeared in 1968 in The People's Choice, by Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet. The theme of their book was presented at the very beginning:

Any practical politician worth his salt knows a great deal about the stratification of the American electorate. It is part of his every day working equipment to know what kinds of people are likely to be dyed-in-wool Republicans or traditional Democrats.<sup>19</sup>

Thus to a politician, different social characteristics should mean different votes.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>David R. Segal and Marshall W. Meyer, "The Social Context Of Political Partianship", Quantitative Ecological Analysis In The Social Sciences, ed. by Mattei Dogan and Stein Rokkan (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1969), p. 217.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>19</sup>Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, The People's Choice (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 16.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 21.



The analysis in the above book of election results produced a multiple correlation coefficient of +0.5 between voting behavior and social factors. Of those factors, social class, religion, and residence produced the greatest predictive values.<sup>21</sup> The authors constructed an Index of Party Predisposition which incorporated significant characteristics of both Republican and Democrats. According to the authors' results, "the features by which the politician differentiates a Republican and a Democrat, then, seem to be economic status, religion, residence, and occupation."<sup>22</sup>

The effect of education on voting behavior was the subject of an article by William N. Stevens and Stephen C. Long, published in 1970. According to their results, the better educated tend to be economic conservatives.<sup>23</sup> "Across the nation, the positive correlation between years of schooling and economic conservatism undoubtedly exists."<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, Bo Anderson, Zelditch Morris, Paul Takagi, and Don Whiteside reported in an article in

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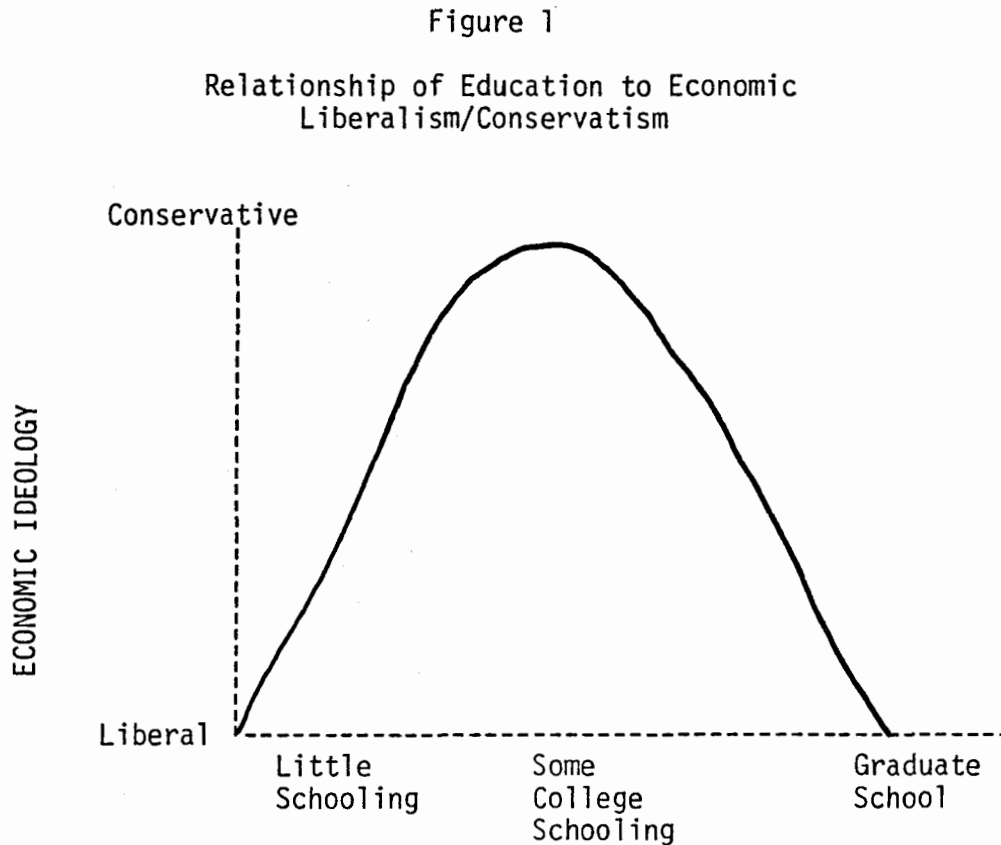
<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-26.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>23</sup>William N. Stephens and Stephen C. Long, "Education And Political Behavior", Political Science Annual, 1969-1970, ed. by James A. Robinson (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1970), p. 11.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

in Acta Sociologica in 1965 a curvilinear correlation between years of schooling and economic liberalism. Their findings are depicted in the following graph:



They conclude that those with little schooling tend to be economically liberal. As one moves into college one tends to become conservative. At the post-graduate level, one becomes liberal again.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Bo Anderson, Zelditch Morris, Paul Takagi, and Don Whiteside, "On Conservative Attitudes", Acta Sociologica, VIII (1965), 194.

### The Psychological School

In opposition to this sociological thinking, there emerged a new school of thought which suggests that the secret of voting behavior lies within one's own mind, and not simply within his or her socio-economic class. The scholars embracing this new thinking argued against, not the actual existence of a class structure, but the consciousness of that structure. According to the authors of The American Voter, "the social class per se rarely becomes formalized as an organization. There is no official class leadership and no official class policy."<sup>26</sup> Gerald M. Pomper described it this way:

Sociological groups do not determine the vote, because they are often no more than artificial categories created by researchers for their own purpose of analysis. An individual may be classified as a worker, but unless he subjectively identifies with the working class, this classification will have little meaning.<sup>27</sup>

The secret, then, lies within the mind: "by casting a vote the individual acts toward a political world whose objects he perceives and evaluates in some fashion...."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Angus Campbell, Phillip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, The American Voter (New York, London, Sydney: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1964), p. 186.

<sup>27</sup>Gerald M. Pomper, Elections In America (New York/Toronto: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1968), p. 81.

<sup>28</sup>Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, The American Voter, p. 13.

Within this framework, three major "objects" have been identified: political parties, political issues, and the political candidates themselves. It is these objects which the voter perceives, evaluates, and reacts to. The result is his or her choice at the polls.

The influence of partisanship begins early in life and is greatly influenced by one's parents. Dr. Richard E. Renneker, M.D., studied forty-two of his patients during the Presidential elections of 1948, 1952, and 1956, and concluded that "party choices seem transmitted more by identification with the parents."<sup>29</sup> He further concluded that there "...was always some sort of meaningful relationship between the voting history of the patient and of the dominant parent."<sup>30</sup>

Gerald M. Pomper also noted the early influence of partisanship but went further to state that of "...the various groups which affect political man, the most important is the political party itself."<sup>31</sup> For Pomper, party identification "...is clearly

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<sup>29</sup>Richard E. Renneker, M.D., "Some Psychodynamic Aspects of Voting Behavior", American Voting Behavior, ed. by Eugene Burdick and Arthur Brodbeck (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1959), p. 399.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Pomper, Elections in America, p. 71.

related to individual perceptions and to political events. Its relationship to the vote itself is, therefore, more obvious and more consistent."<sup>32</sup>

Further support for the role of party can be found in an article published in 1959, by Angus Campbell and Donald E. Stokes.<sup>33</sup> Their comparative study of SES and party lead to a conclusion that "...traditional allegiance to party, whether Democratic or Republican, continues to be the major correlate of voting behavior."<sup>34</sup> They went on to conclude that this "...identification with party accounts (also) for a larger portion of variance in preference than do attitudes toward the candidates and issues."<sup>35</sup>

This dominance of party is again reflected and reinforced by The American Voter. In this book, the authors (Angus Campbell, Phillip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes) note that in addition to the influence of party, partisan preferences show great stability between elections. Fluctuations that do occur are due

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>33</sup>Angus Campbell and Donald E. Stokes, "Partisan Attitudes And The Presidential Vote", American Voting Behavior, ed. Eugene Burdick and Arthur J. Brodbeck (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1959).

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 368.

to conflicts between one's personal forces (personal relationships) and his social forces.<sup>36</sup> Campbell, et. al., summarize their findings in the following statement: "Often a change of candidates and a broad alteration in the nature of issues disturb very little the relative partisanship of a set of electoral units."<sup>37</sup> Latter studies, however, attempt to refute this dominance of party and its stability over time.

Advocates of an increased role of issue orientation point to what they feel is a disintegration of the traditional party structure. The emerging "independent voter" is often cited as supporting this view. Gerald Pomper, for example, suggests that over the years the candidates during the campaigns, especially Barry Goldwater, have emphasized the issues and their party's position on those issues.<sup>38</sup> Pomper sees an increasing ideological identification, and awareness by the electorate, of the political parties. It is this increased awareness, he believes, that has valued issue position to the forefront in determining voting behavior.<sup>39</sup> This line of thinking is carried further by Henry Plotkin in an essay published

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<sup>36</sup>Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, The American Voter, pp. 67-68.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Gerald M. Pomper, "From Confusion to Clarity: Issues And American Voters, 1956-1958", American Political Science Review, LXVI (June, 1972, No. 2), pp. 422-423.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 422-426.

in 1977. In that essay he contends that inflation, unemployment, and tax policy were the crucial elements of the '76 election.<sup>40</sup> The American voter is becoming "...increasingly ideological in his or her partisanship, with the Democrats becoming a predominantly liberal party, the Republicans predominantly conservative."<sup>41</sup> Consequently, if one sees himself as a liberal, then he will vote for the party which takes a liberal position on the issues.

Michael Margolis, in an article published in 1977, takes issue with this issue orientation.<sup>42</sup> Margolis examined three of the issues utilized by Gerald Pomper and the National Survey Research Center, and found that 48% of those interviewed saw no differences between the parties on the question of school integration. By adding a "no opinion" response, only 34% saw any differences and thus could have voted on the basis of this issue. On the issue of Vietnam, however, 48% to 51% did perceive a difference between the parties.<sup>43</sup> The key for Margolis is issue saliency:

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<sup>40</sup>Henry A. Plotkin, "Issues in the 1976 Presidential Campaign," *The Election of 1976*, ed. by Marlene M. Pomper (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1977), p. 42.

<sup>41</sup>Gerald M. Pomper, "The Presidential Election", *ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>42</sup>Michael Margolis, "From Confusion to Confusion: Issues And The American Voter (1956-1972)", *American Political Science Review*, LXXI (March, 1977, No. 1).

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

the voters must know about the issues, they must know each party's position on the issues, and they must care about the issues.

These are the main ingredients of issue voting.<sup>44</sup> If the above ingredients are present, then issue orientation will be a factor in the voting decision. Thus issue would be a short term force which may appear for a period of time and then disappear. Such thinking is strikingly similar to that advanced in The American Voter some seventeen years earlier.

In that book, Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes advanced the idea that in order for an issue to have any influence, three conditions had to be met. They were:<sup>45</sup>

1. The Issue must be cognized in some form.
2. The Issue must arouse minimal feeling.
3. The Issue must be accompanied by some perception that one party represents the person's own position better than other parties.

The amount of influence exerted by an issue will depend on the degree to which these conditions are fulfilled. Campbell, et. al., note that "only rarely does a single policy belief comprise the sole force in the psychological field as the voting decision is made."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>45</sup>Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, The American Voter, p. 98.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., pp. 97-98.



The third and final "object" for the Psychological school is the political candidate himself. Stanley Kelley and Thad Miner explored this "object" in an article presented in the American Political Science Review in June of 1974. They concluded, from their study of the 1952, 1956, 1960, and 1964 Presidential elections, that results found in The American Voter were simply "...an accounting after the fact."<sup>47</sup> Kelley and Miner contend that "...the authors of The American Voter (did) identify the ingredients that go into voting decisions, but not the recipe for mixing the ingredients"...<sup>48</sup> It is this "recipe" that is the key.

Kelley and Miner developed what they refer to as the "Decision Rule." It is the means for translating attitudes towards the political "objects" into a decision of how to vote.

The voter canvasses his likes and dislikes of the leading candidates and major parties involved in an election. Weighing each like and dislike equally, he votes for the candidate toward whom he has the greatest net number of favorable attitudes, if there is such a candidate. If no candidate has such

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<sup>47</sup>Stanley Kelley, Jr. and Thad W. Miner, "The Simple Act of Voting", American Political Science Review (June, 1974, No. 2), p. 573.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

advantage, the voter votes consistently with his party affiliation, if he has one. If his attitudes do not incline him toward one candidate more than toward another, and if he does not identify with one of the major parties, the voter reaches a null decision.<sup>49</sup>

It should be noted that candidate orientation is considered first. If there is nothing noteworthy there, then partisanship takes control. Partisanship is the governing or long-term force, subject to interruptions by attractive candidates.

Essentially, then, what we have is political party allegiance as the basis of voting decisions within the Psychological School. This is the long-term governing force. From time to time, though, either prominent issues (Vietnam) and/or candidates (Eisenhower) may rise up and challenge traditional party allegiance. Issues and candidates represent the short-term forces that operate in the political environment. It must be further noted, however, that the long term erosion of traditional party loyalty has greatly increased the opportunity for issues and/or candidates to influence voting behavior.

#### Discussion

In conclusion, two major schools dominate voting behavior theory. The Sociological School contends that one's socio-economic status determines his or her voting behavior. Supporters of this school offer considerable amounts of data which they feel link SES and voting behavior. The Psychological School, however, offers a

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 574.

different line of reasoning. Its supporters contend that the individual's perception, evaluation, and reaction to the political environment is the answer. Just because one is poor, or black, or Catholic does not mean he will vote Democratic. Likewise, if one is wealthy, he may not vote Republican.

I have not attempted here to make a case for or against either school. Rather, I have simply tried to acquaint the reader with some of the ideas that dominate the field of voting behavior. This study is concerned predominately with the role of socio-economic status in determining voting behavior. Furthermore, the use of aggregate data precludes any analysis of the Psychological School. The following chapters will, therefore, focus only on the Sociological School.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY

This study, as was noted previously, will focus only on the Sociological School. We will be examining only the role, if any, of socio-economic status in determining voting behavior in the City of Richmond, Virginia. We will attempt to determine if the findings of Berelson, Lazarsfeld, McPhee, Lipset, etc. are applicable to Richmond; that is, is there a class basis for politics in Richmond, Virginia? Specifically, we will seek the answers to five major questions. They are:

1. Can support for the Sociological School be found in Richmond, Virginia?
2. If so, how do the results compare with previous studies?
3. Do the lower socio-economic classes actually vote consistently for leftist candidates?
4. Do the upper socio-economic classes actually vote consistently for rightist candidates?
5. Are there any variations among the different types of elections (Presidential, Congressional, etc.)?

Election results and demographic data for each voting precinct in the City of Richmond will be correlated and analysed. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation will be utilized to measure the linear relationship, if any, between SES (the independent variable) and voting behavior (the dependent variable). We will

be provided the strength of any relationship as well as the direction. For example, if income is found to be related to voting behavior, the correlation coefficient will tell us how strong the relationship is and what happens to that voting behavior as income increases or decreases. It must be noted, however, that by using linear measurement control for other outside variables is limited. The actual correlation coefficient will tend to be somewhat inflated. Only factor analysis can supply complete control, and that procedure is beyond the capabilities of this author. This inflation of correlation must be taken into consideration when formulating any conclusions.

For the purposes of this study, four variables will constitute our definition of socio-economic status:

1. Income
2. Education
3. Occupation
4. Race

They are found throughout previous studies and data for them is easily obtained. More importantly, though, they are sufficient to construct a general picture of the socio-economic status of the areas under study. They may not tell us exactly how high or low the status is, but they will enable us to differentiate between high and low. Income, as used in this paper, is defined as mean income as reported in the 1970 census. Education is defined as the average number of years of schooling as reported in the 1970 census. Occupation will be divided into two major groups, blue collar and white collar. Blue collar is defined as the percentage

of the labor force employed as laborers, craftsmen, and foremen. White collar is defined as the percentage of the labor force employed as professionals, managers, and administrators. Within Richmond, Virginia, there is only one minority race or ethnic group of any significant size and that is the Negro. Therefore, race is defined as the percentage of the population being black.

A study of the maps of the census tracts and the voting precincts, provided in Appendix A and B, reveals striking similarities. Voting precincts correspond very closely to the various census tracts. By aligning the precincts with their appropriate or closest census tracts, one can construct a general socio-economic picture of each precinct. Once this is accomplished, it is rather easy to secure the voting results of each precinct and compare these to the socio-economic census tracts. Maps of the voting precincts as they existed in 1971, and the census tracts as they existed in 1970 are included as Appendix A and B to this report.

The last item to be discussed here is the types and dates of the elections to be studied. Since the precinct map is dated 1971 and the census tract map is dated 1970, in the interest of consistency, the election years must be close to those dates. With this in mind, the following six elections have been selected:

1. 1968 Presidential
2. 1969 Gubernatorial
3. 1970 Senatorial
4. 1971 Lt. Governor
5. 1972 Presidential
6. 1973 Gubernatorial

It was the decision of this author that only the more prominent elections would be incorporated; therefore, nothing below a statewide election will be considered. Statewide elections attract considerably more publicity and attention than do local elections and, therefore, result in greater awareness on the part of the voter. The above elections satisfy the time requirement, the type of election requirement, and yet provide a good variety.

Seymour Martin Lipset, in his book Political Man, utilized the dichotomy of left and right for reporting voting behavior. This study will utilize the same dichotomy as well as the same definitions. A leftist vote is defined as a vote for a candidate who recommends and/or advocates changes in the status quo. Support for the status quo represents a rightist candidate.<sup>50</sup> Position papers, news media accounts, and the candidates own remarks were evaluated in order to assign them a left or right position. The resulting assignments are contained in the table below:

Table 2  
Left/Right Positions of Candidates

<u>Election</u>	<u>Left</u>	<u>Right</u>
1968 Presidential	Humphrey	Nixon
1969 Gubernatorial	Battle	Holton
1970 Senatorial	Rawlings	Byrd
1971 Lt. Governor	Howell	Kostell
1972 Presidential	McGovern	Nixon
1973 Gubernatorial	Howell	Godwin

<sup>50</sup>Lipset, Political Man, p. 574.

It must be emphasized at this point that the above assignments are only my interpretations of the candidates, in the light of the definitions of left and right. It is admitted that some of them are extremely close in their positions, particularly Battle and Holton in 1969. Also, the influence of consumer issues and Henry Howell's populist appeal in 1973 is acknowledged. During that election, he did enjoy much of the Wallace vote. In fact, he and Senator Byrd share some support. A close examination, however, reveals that "...Howell does gain greater support as we travel leftward on the ideological continuum".<sup>51</sup>

At this point, we are prepared to begin our analysis. We will examine each of the four variables to see if there is any relationship to the recorded voting behavior. Precincts will be treated as individual respondents, with voting results recorded as a percentage of the total vote.

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<sup>51</sup>Larry Sabato, Aftermath Of 'Armageddon': An Analysis Of The 1973 Virginia Gubernatorial Election (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Printing Office, 1975), p. 76.



## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

This section represents the heart of this project. It is here that our findings are presented. The discussion will begin with an over-all view of all the correlation coefficients achieved, and then will move to an individual and more detailed analysis of SES components (income, education, occupation, race).

Initially, a correlation analysis was made between each independent variable and the average percent of leftist voting for all six elections combined. The results are contained below:

Table 3  
Correlation Coefficients - All Elections

SES Component	% Left - All Elections
1. Income	-.5405
2. Education	-.6569
3. % Blue Collar	.2886
4. % White Collar	-.7286
5. % Black	.9316

According to accepted statistical theory, only correlation coefficients of  $\pm .3$  or more, can be considered statistically significant. Five of the variables satisfy this requirement. Only the percent

of blue collar workers failed, but the value of .2886 is very close. One must keep in mind, however, the inflation aspect of linear analysis discussed in Chapter II. The relationships may in fact be substantially less than at first glance. A later examination of each separate variable will attempt to adjust and place the relationships into proper perspective. We must note at this point, though, the direction of the relationships.

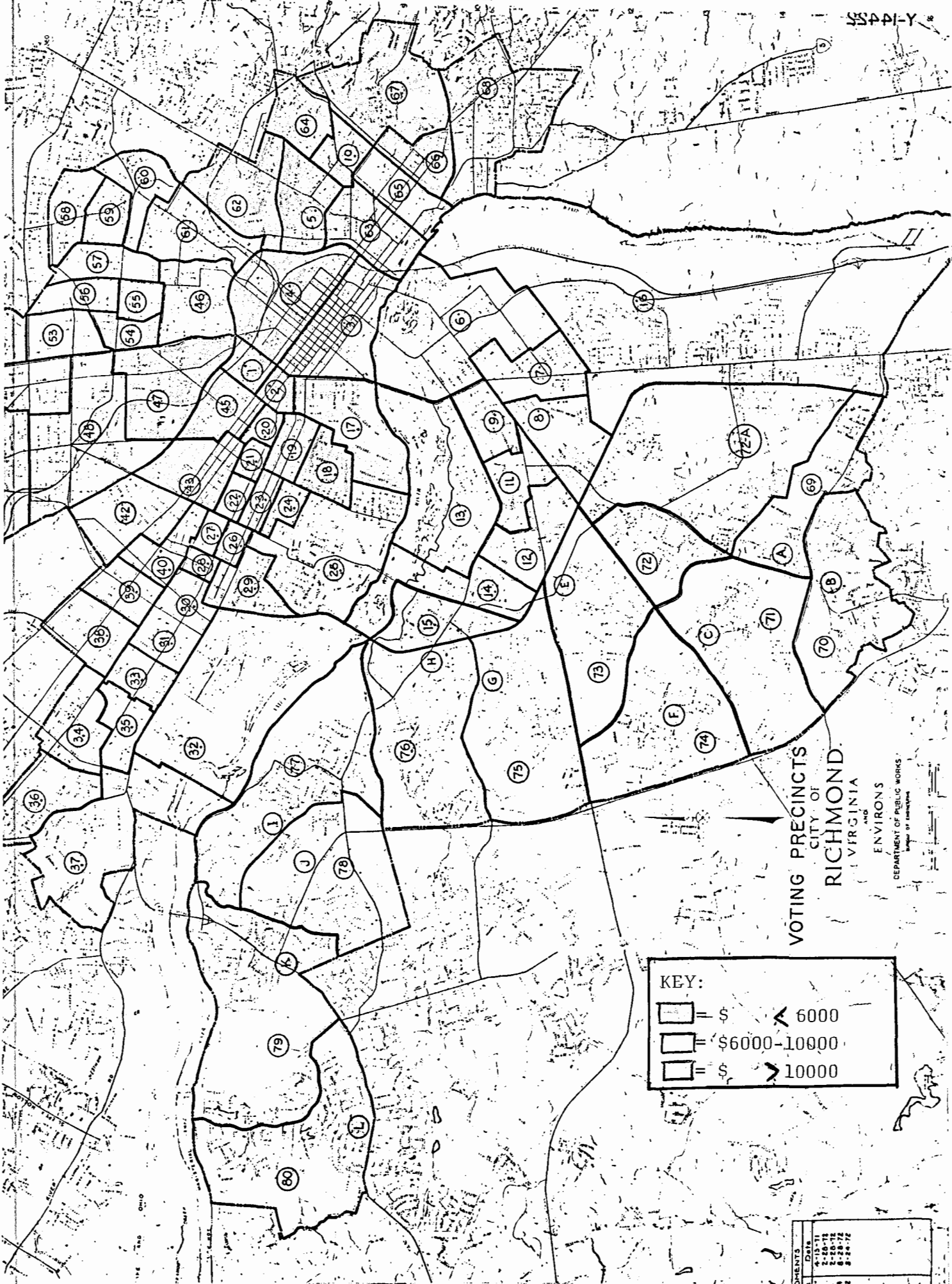
A positive correlation coefficient means that as the independent variable increases, so does the dependent variable, and vice versa. A negative coefficient reflects an inverse relationship; as the independent variable increases, the dependent variable decreases, and vice versa. Percent blue collar workers and percent black correlated positively. Therefore, as they increase, so does leftist voting. Income, education, and percent white collar correlated negatively. As they increase, the percentage of leftist voting decreases. An examination of the precincts themselves will confirm or deny these findings.

The first SES variable to be closely examined is income. Of the seventy-seven precincts in Richmond, Virginia, twenty have average mean incomes of less than \$6,000, thirty-five average \$6,000 - \$10,000, and twenty-two average more than \$10,000. Figure 2 reflects this distribution. Our correlation coefficient of  $-.5405$  suggests that 29% of the variance of leftist voting behavior can be accounted for by income. Furthermore, as income rises, leftist voting decreases.

Figure 2

Income Distribution

SS441-Y



KEY:

[Shaded Box]	= \$	< 6000
[White Box]	= \$	6000-10000
[Hatched Box]	= \$	> 10000

VOTING PRECINCTS  
CITY OF  
RICHMOND  
VIRGINIA  
AND  
ENVIRONS  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
Bureau of Statistics

DATE	BY
1-25-72	
2-25-72	
3-25-72	
4-25-72	

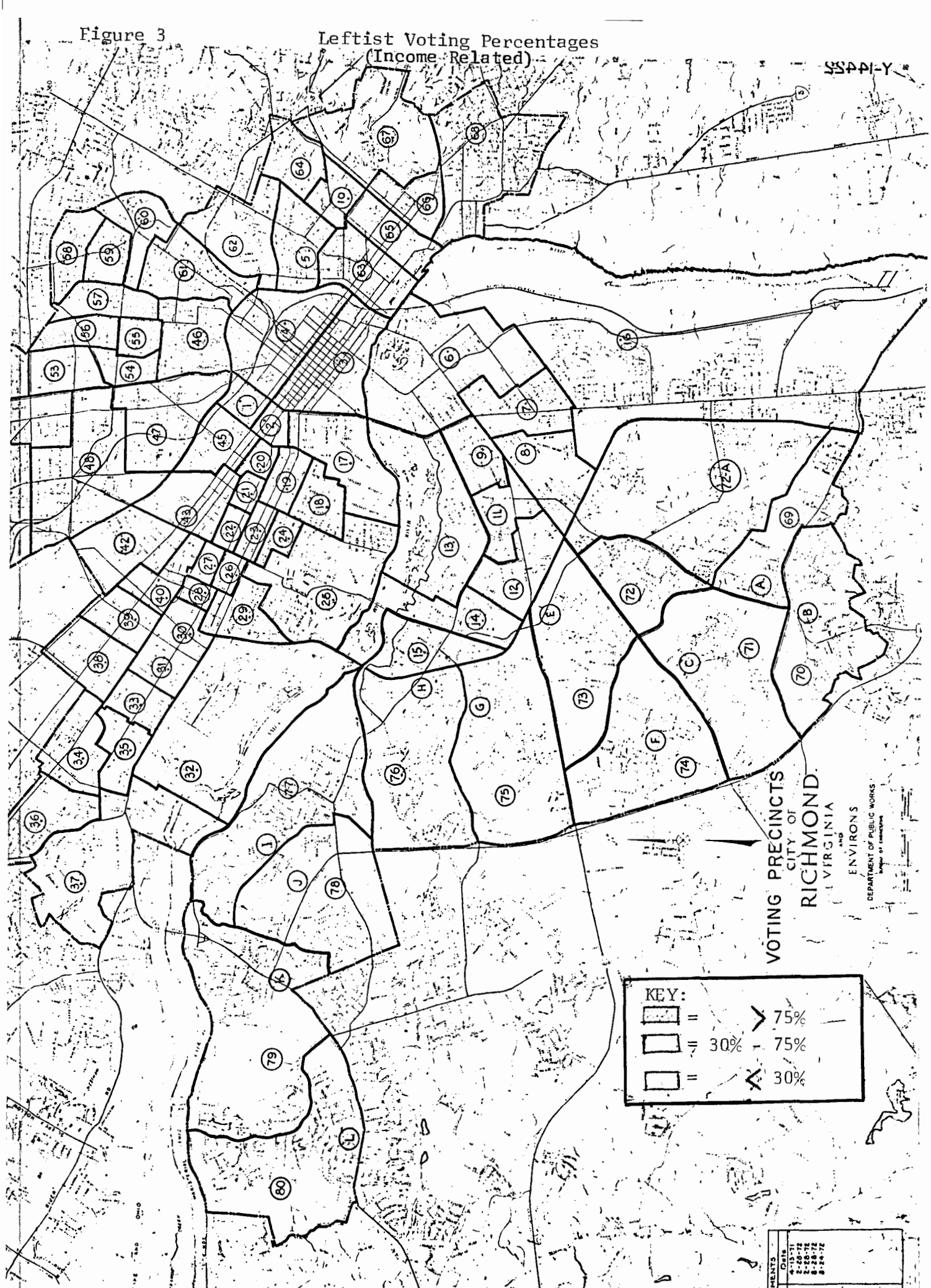
Group one, less than \$6,000, yielded an average percentage of leftist vote of 77%. Within this group, however, there were four unusual cases. Precincts 21, 20, 2, and 43 yielded an average leftist vote of only 33%. Group two, \$6,000 - \$10,000 yielded an average leftist vote of 52%. Unfortunately, within this group, there is a wide variation in leftist percentages. Twelve precincts produced leftist voting percentages in excess of 75%. They are reflected in Figure 3 (shaded green). Thirteen precincts averaged between 30-75% left. They are shaded yellow in Figure 3. Finally, ten precincts produced less than 30%. They are shaded red in Figure 3. Group 3, greater than \$10,000 mean income, over-all yielded an average of 24% leftist support. Unlike group 2, though, there is only one odd case. Precinct 25 produced an average leftist vote of 77%. Yet its mean income was in excess of \$10,000.

It appears, then, that the relationship between income and leftist voting is strongest at the ends of the income scale. As income moves toward the center, the relationship weakens. Unfortunately, this too fades upon closer examination. Group 2 (\$6,000 - \$10,000 mean income) was broken down into four sub-groups, reflecting the \$6,000 - \$6,999 precincts, the \$7,000 - \$7,999 precincts, the \$8,000 - \$8,999 precincts, and the \$9,000 - \$9,999 precincts. A comparison of these income levels and their corresponding leftist voting results are contained in Table 4.

Figure 3

Leftist Voting Percentages  
(Income Related)

SSAP-1-Y



KEY:

= > 75%  
 = 30% - 75%  
 = < 30%

VOTING PRECINCTS  
CITY OF  
RICHMOND  
VIRGINIA  
AND  
ENVIRONS  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
BUREAU OF ENGINEERING

DATE
2-28-72
2-28-72
2-28-72
2-28-72

Table 4  
Income vs Leftist Voting (Group 2)

Income Level	No. Precincts < 50% Left	No. Precincts > 50% Left
\$6,000 - \$6,999	5	7
\$7,000 - \$7,999	6	6
\$8,000 - \$8,999	4	1
\$9,000 - \$9,999	4	2

The relationship between income and voting behavior appears weak at best. At the lower income levels, one might just as well find either a low or a high percentage of leftist voting.

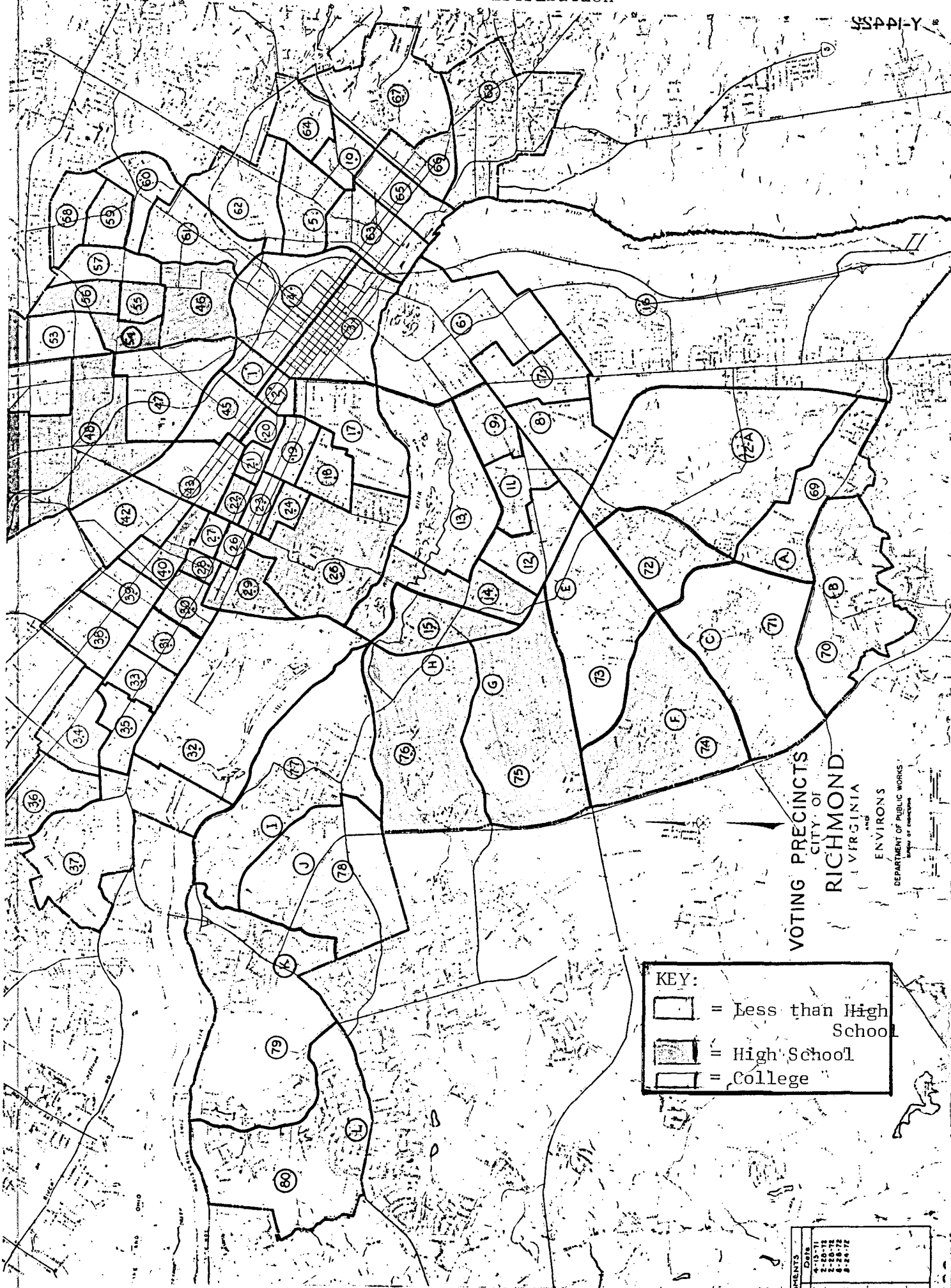
Education is the second SES variable to be explored. The computer produced a negative correlation coefficient of  $-.06569$  between median school years and leftist voting. This translates into an apparent 43% accountability of leftist voting variance. Also, because of the negative sign of the coefficient, leftist voting should decrease as median school years increase, and vice versa. Within Richmond's seventy-seven precincts, forty-three averaged less than 12 years of schooling, seventeen averaged 12 years, and seventeen averaged more than 12 years. Figure 4 depicts this distribution.

Group one, less than 12 years, produced a wide distribution of leftist voting. Percentages of leftist voting ranged from a low of 16% to a high of 96%. Table 5 outlines these findings, and

Figure 4

# Education Distribution

SS441-Y



**KEY:**

- = Less than High School
- = High School
- = College

DATE	DATE
4-15-71	
5-15-71	
6-15-71	
7-15-71	
8-24-72	



SSA PI-Y

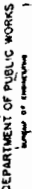




Table 5  
Leftist Voting Percentages by Number of Precincts  
(Less than 12 years of Schooling)

% Leftist Voting	No. of Precincts
0 - 25	4
26 - 50	11
51 - 75	7
76 - 100	21

Figure 5 displays the precincts' locations. An examination of Table 5 reveals that twenty-eight of the forty-three precincts yielded more than 50% leftist voting. That is 65% of the sample! Group two, those precincts averaging at least 12 years of schooling reflects a somewhat different distribution. Precincts here tend to polarize around the higher and lower leftist percentages. Of the seventeen cases, eleven averaged less than 35% left and six averaged about 75% left. At the college level (Group three), however, real strength appeared. Within this group, all seventeen precincts averaged less than 50% left. In fact, all but three averaged less than 25%.

Almost every precinct which deviated from the hypothesized relationship between education and leftist voting had a similar percentage of black population. For example, there are twelve precincts which average 9 years of schooling. Of these, ten yielded

leftist voting percentages in excess of 75%. They also yielded black population percentages in excess of 67%. On the other hand, two of these twelve produced leftist percentages of only 34% and 47%. Their corresponding black percentages were 11% and 25%. Other levels of schooling revealed similar results. In conclusion, then, the relationship between education and leftist voting appears weak. At the less than high school level there is some support, while at the high school level there is little support. At the college level support returns. It may well be, however, that the percentage of blacks is the real relationship. We will hold further discussion of this until later.

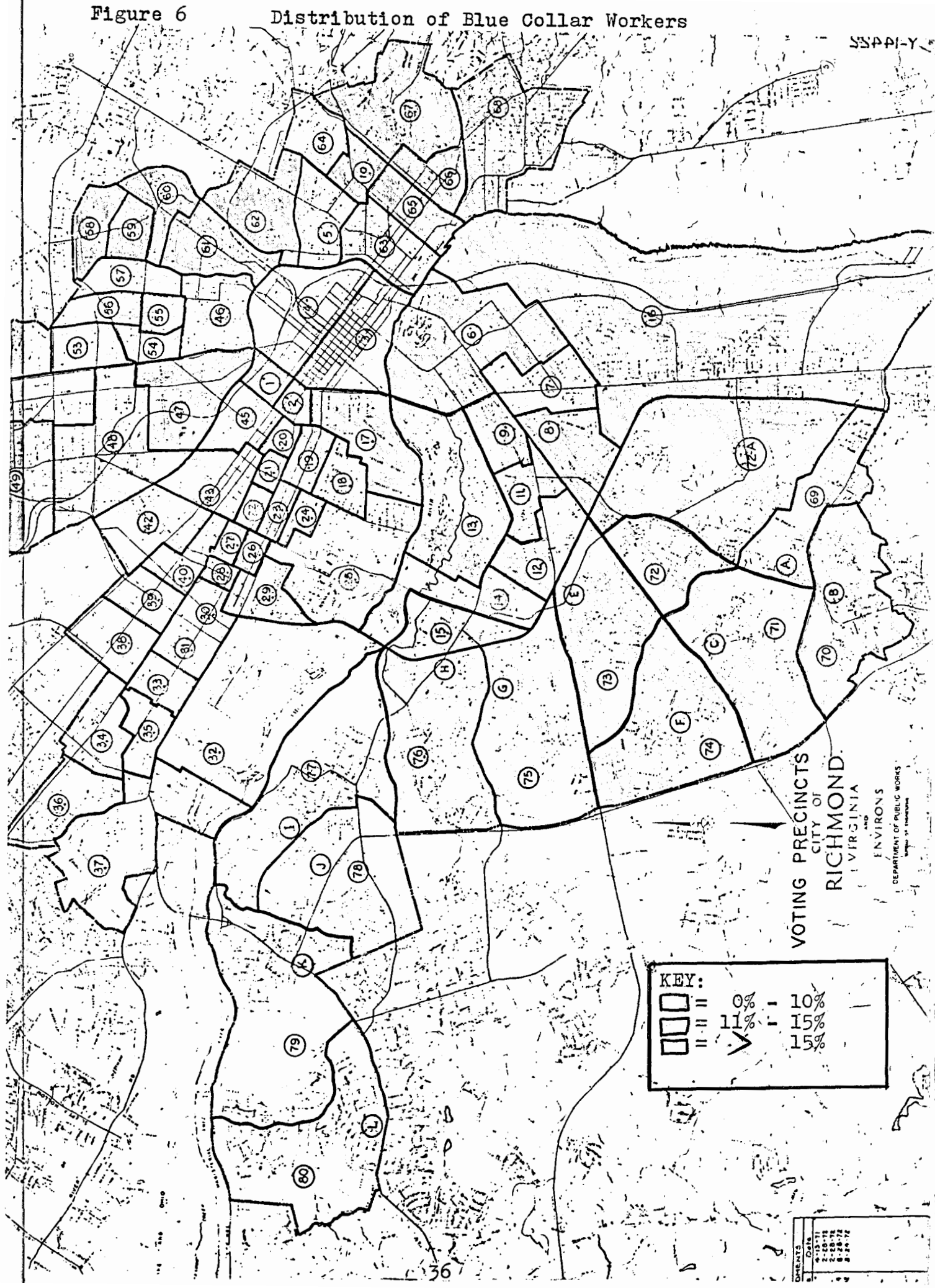
The third SES variable examined was occupation. As was noted in Chapter II, this variable has been divided into two components, percent of blue collar workers and percent of white collar workers. Previous research suggests that leftist support should be found among the blue collar workers. Also, as the percent of blue collar workers increases, so should the percent of leftist voting. Likewise, we should expect to see an inverse relationship with the percent of white collar workers. As they increase, leftist voting should decrease.

The variable of blue collar did indeed correlate positively with leftist voting. The correlation coefficient, however, was only +0.2886. This translates into an 8% accountability of the

Figure 6

# Distribution of Blue Collar Workers

SS441-Y



VOTING PRECINCTS  
CITY OF  
RICHMOND  
VIRGINIA  
AND  
ENVIRONS  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
Map No. 17-100-100

KEY:

□	=	0% - 10%
□	=	11% - 15%
✓	=	15%

DATE	BY
1-13-71	1
2-28-71	2
8-28-72	3
8-28-72	4

variance of leftist voting behavior. As was noted in Chapter II, only  $\pm 0.3$  or more can be considered statistically significant. On the surface, therefore, the relationship between blue collar and leftist voting appears rather weak, especially given the inflationary tendency of linear analysis.

Of the seventy-seven precincts under study, three averaged less than 10% blue collar, twenty-four averaged between 10% - 15%, and thirty averaged more than 15% blue collar. As a whole, the percent blue collar ranged from a low of 1% to a high of 27%. Figure 6 depicts this distribution. Group one (10% or less blue collar) should, according to the hypothesis, reflect the least amount of leftist voting while group three (more than 15% blue collar) should reflect the greatest amount of leftist voting. Surprisingly, this does not appear to be the case.

Group one yielded leftist voting percentages ranging from a low of 9% to a high of 77%. Group two's percentages ranged from 13% to 97%. Finally, group three produced a range of 16% to 96%. Table 6 summarizes these distributions.

Table 6  
Distribution of Voting Percentages - Blue Collar

Leftist Percentages	Number of Precincts		
	Group 1 ( $\leq 10\%$ )	Group 2 (10%-15%)	Group 3 ( $> 15\%$ )
0% - 25%	17	4	4
25% - 50%	3	5	10
51% - 75%	1	2	3
76% - 100%	2	13	13

One can see that groups two and three do not support the original hypothesis concerning leftist voting and blue collar. The distributions of leftist support is somewhat balanced. Group one, though, presents a somewhat different picture. As one can see, the great majority of the precincts within this group averaged 25% or less of leftist voting. Now one might conclude that these figures tend to support the original hypothesis. There appears, however, to be another variable at work here.

Of the seventeen precincts registering 25% or less leftist vote, only two contain more than 5% blacks. On the other hand, the two precincts averaging more than 75% left produced black percentages of 58% and 69%. The four precincts in the other two brackets also yielded progressively higher black percentages. Perhaps then, as in the case of education, the black percentage is more important. We will examine this in greater detail later.

We turn now to the other half of the occupation variable, percent white collar. The computer generated a negative correlation coefficient of -0.7286. That translates into an accountability of 53% of the variance of leftist voting behavior. Such coefficients are highly unusual in statistical analysis. Undoubtedly, the inflation aspect of linear analysis is partly responsible. Nevertheless, a strong inverse relationship is indicated. We should expect to find the percent of leftist voting decreasing as the percent of white collar workers increases.

White collar percentages varied within Richmond from a low of 5% to a high of 60%. Of the seventy-seven precincts, thirty-nine

averaged 0% - 20% white collar, twenty-five averaged 21% - 40%, and thirteen averaged greater than 40% white collar. Figure 7 depicts this distribution. Group one (0% - 20% white collar), if the hypothesis is correct, should reflect the highest percentage of leftist voting and group three (greater than 40% white collar) should reflect the lowest percentage. Table 7 summarizes the distribution of leftist voting within these three groups.

Table 7  
Distribution of Voting Percentages  
(White Collar)

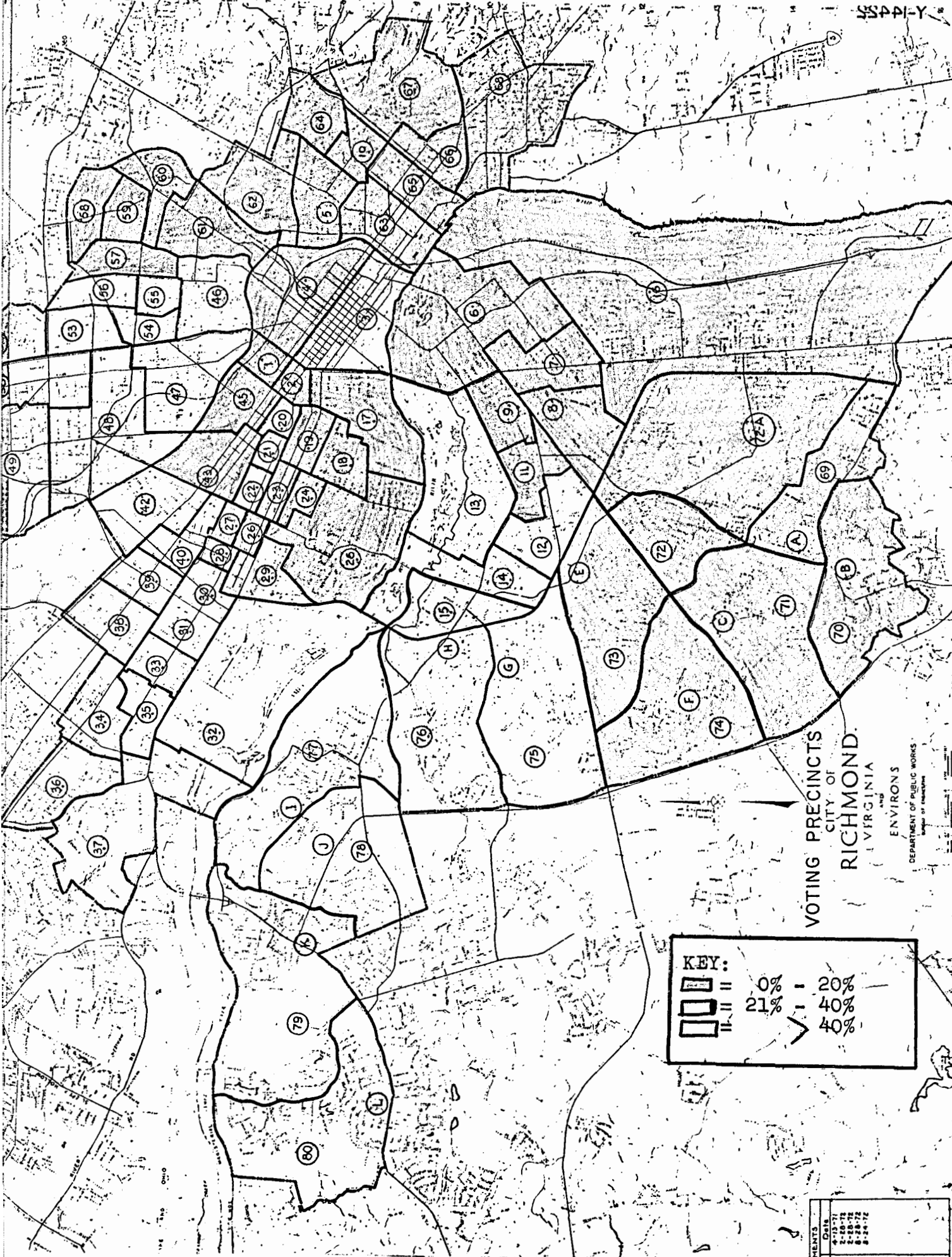
<u>Leftist Percentages</u>	<u>Number of Precincts</u>		
	<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>	<u>Group 3</u>
	(0%-20%)	(21%-40%)	( > 40%)
0 - 25%	2	10	13
26 - 50%	11	7	0
51 - 75%	5	4	0
76 - 100%	21	4	0

An examination of this table does suggest support for the hypothesis. As we progress from a low percentage of white collar workers (group one) to a higher percentage (group three), the number of precincts with a low leftist voting percentage increases. Likewise, the reverse happens. For example, there are more precincts in the 0% - 25% leftist voting bracket in group three than there is in group one.

Figure 7.

# Distribution of White Collar Workers

SS441-Y



Conversely, there are fewer precincts in the 76% - 100% voting bracket in group three than there are in group one. As the percentage of white collar workers increases, the percentage of leftist voting decreases. But what about the black influence?

The two precincts in group one which fall into the 0% - 25% voting bracket yield leftist voting percentages of 24% and 25%. Their corresponding black percentages are 1% and 19% respectively. The twenty-one precincts in group one which fall into the 76% - 100% voting bracket all average in excess of 58% black. In fact, fourteen of the twenty-one average in excess of 75% black. Furthermore, all of the thirteen precincts in group three average less than 12% black. Eleven of them even average less than 5%. The pattern is obvious. Precincts with lower percentages of black inhabitants tend to yield lower percentages of leftist voting.

In summation, then, the relationship between occupation and leftist voting appears moderate. The relationship to blue collar workers is somewhat weak, but present. The extreme lower percentages of blue collar workers reflect low percentages of leftist voting. White collar workers on the other hand suggest a strong relationship. The correlation coefficient was large and the precinct data corroborate it. There is, however, that one cloud of uncertainty, the role of race. A pattern emerged here which suggests that the role of race may well be the primary component. We will now examine this in greater detail.



Race is the final SES variable examined. As was noted in Chapter II, race is defined as the percentage of population being black. The computer produced a correlation coefficient of +0.9316 between percent black and leftist voting. This means that 87% of the variance of leftist voting can be accounted for by the percentage of black population. Coupled with a level of significance of .001 (only one change out of a thousand that the results are due to chance), this easily becomes our strongest relationship. Furthermore, since the coefficient is positive, we expect the percent of leftist voting to increase as the percent of blacks increases.

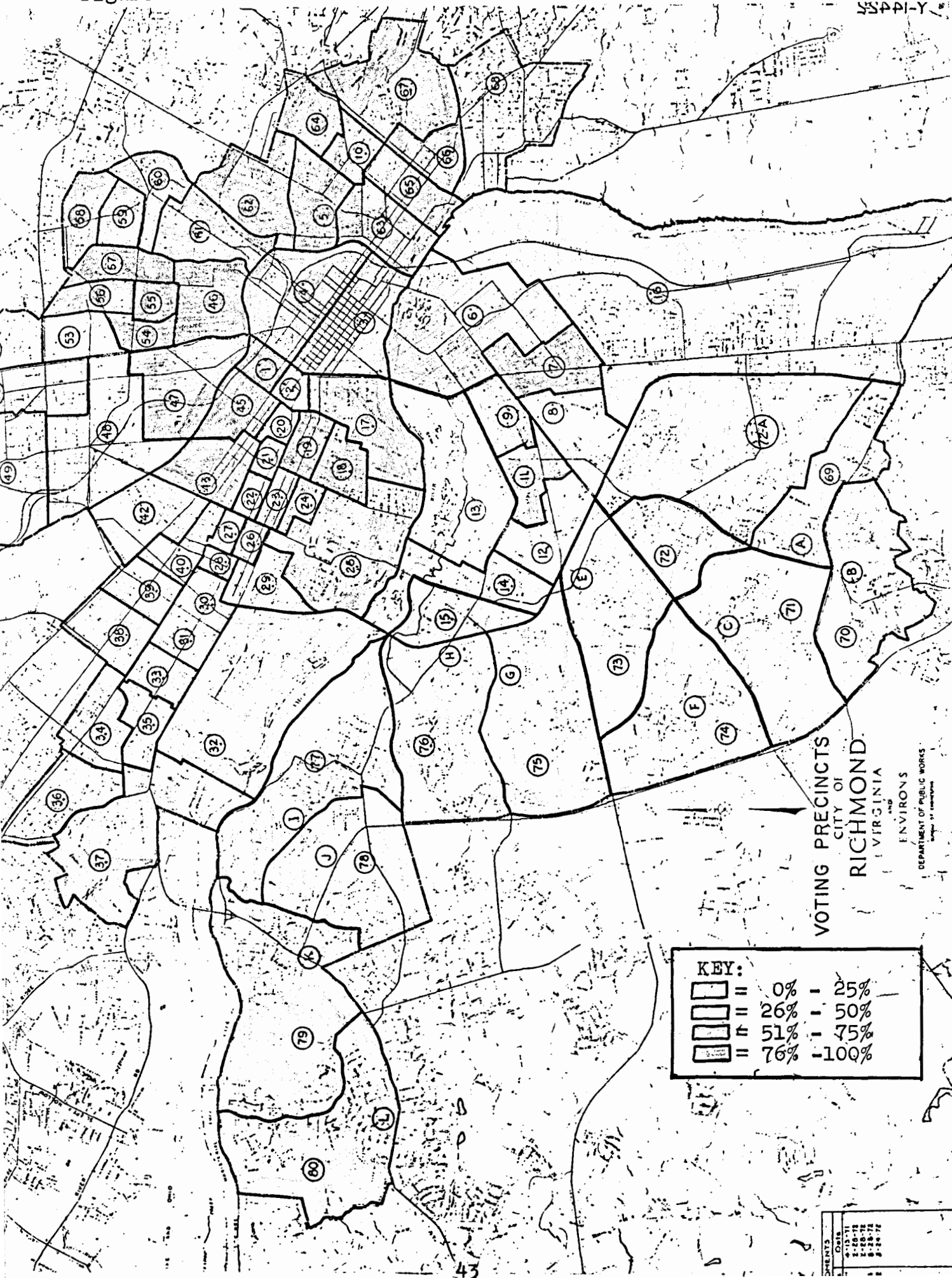
Earlier, we suggested this relationship as an explanation for the deviant results obtained for education and occupation. In those odd cases high and low percentages of leftist voting were associated with corresponding high and low black percentages. An examination of all the precincts, with respect to percent black, reinforces this.

Within the City of Richmond, thirty-eight precincts averaged 0% - 25% black, seven averaged 26% - 50%, fifteen averaged 51% - 75%, and seventeen averaged greater than 75% black. This distribution is depicted in Figure 8. Group one (0% - 25%), according to the correlation coefficient, should reflect the lowest amount of leftist voting and group four (greater than 75%) should reflect the highest. Groups two and three should fall in between. Table 8 illustrates the breakdown.

Figure 8

# Distribution of Black Population

SSAP-1-Y



DATE	BY
1-15-71	
2-28-72	
3-28-72	
4-28-72	

Table 8  
% Black vs. % Left

% Black	Number of Precincts (% Left)			
	1 (0%-25%)	2 (26%-50%)	3 (51%-75%)	4 (76%-100%)
0% - 25%	24	14	0	0
26% - 50%	1	3	3	0
51% - 75%	0	1	5	9
75% -100%	0	0	1	16

Notice the diagonal (marked in red) from the upper left corner to the lower right corner. Precincts with the lowest percentages of blacks also yield the lowest level of leftist voting. As we increase the percentage of blacks in the population (moving along the diagonal), we find more precincts reflecting higher levels of leftist voting. This is particularly true at the extreme ends of the diagonal. But what about the odd group, the fourteen precincts within group 2 (25% - 50%)? At first glance, group 2 appears to be an exception to the hypothesis. A closer examination, however, refutes this.

Many of these twelve precincts are undoubtedly simply deviant cases. Both high and low levels of income can be found. Also, high percentages of both blue collar and white collar workers are present. There are three precincts, however, which can be explained. They are #21, #26, and #3. All contain high percentages of young people and high school graduates. Table 9 depicts this.

Table 9  
Percentages of Young People and  
High School Graduates  
(Deviant Cases)

		Precincts			
		<u>Avg. for City</u>	<u>#21</u>	<u>#26</u>	<u>#3</u>
1.	% of Population under				
	44 years of age	35%	46%	38%	49%
2.	% High School Graduates	36%	58%	39%	42%

As a matter of fact, these areas are inhabited by large numbers of Virginia Commonwealth University students. This is in line with the findings on education noted earlier. The strongest relationship between education and leftist voting occurred at the college level. Within these three precincts, #21, #26, #3, we find many college students. Therefore, the apparent relationship between race and leftist voting is not diminished by these deviant cases.

At this point, we turn our attention to the effect, if any, of the type of election. Four specific types have been examined: Presidential (2), Senatorial, Gubernatorial (2), and Lt. Governor. Correlation coefficients were generated for each election and cross referenced with the SES variables. The resulting matrix is reproduced.

Table 10  
SES & Election Correlation Matrix

	V7	V8	V9	V10	V11	V12
V1	-.5077	-.5063	-.5282	-.5612	-.5573	-.5730
V2	-.6202	-.6183	-.6523	-.6677	-.6639	-.6813
V3	+.2125	+.2107	+.2818	+.3063	+.3290	+.3557
V4	-.6704	-.6700	-.7104	-.7520	-.7585	-.7667
V5	+.9136	+.9125	+.9212	+.9377	+.9200	+.9366

NOTES:

V1 = Mean Income

V8 = 1969 Gubernatorial

V2 = School Years

V9 = 1971 Lt. Governor

V3 = % Blue Collar

V10 = 1970 Senatorial

V4 = % White Collar

V11 = 1972 Presidential

V5 = % Black

V12 = 1973 Gubernatorial

V7 = 1968 Presidential

-----

As one can see, there are variations in the correlation coefficients from election to election. Of the five SES variables, four produced the highest coefficients in the 1973 Gubernatorial election. The fifth variable, race, saw its highest coefficient in the 1970 Senatorial race. On the other side, all five variables produced their lowest coefficients in the 1969 Gubernatorial election. Does this mean that SES is more viable in Gubernatorial elections, as opposed

to Presidential and Senatorial elections? I think not for two reasons. First of all, the changes in the coefficients are simply not large enough to support that generalization. Secondly, 1973 was a volatile year. Watergate, inflation, recession, bus-ing, etc. all helped to increase the importance of elections.

An examination of the 1973 election reveals strong ideological overtones. For example, note the headlines of The Richmond Times Dispatch on Sunday, October 28, 1973:

GODWIN VS. HOWELL . . . leading mighty  
ideological armies toward a Virginia  
Armageddon at the polls on November 6.<sup>52</sup>

In contrast the climate surrounding the 1969 election was much less ideological. Now recall Gerald Pomper's idea that the political parties and the voters are becoming more ideological. If one accepts this, then it follows that the more pronounced and dramatized the ideological differences between the candidates, the easier it is for the voter to choose accurately. In 1973 the choice was clear and the vote more accurate. The lower coefficients found in 1969 might well be due to a confusion on the part of the voter. Ideological differences were unclear.

In conclusion, within the Sociological framework the type of election does not appear to have any effect. Within the Psychological framework, however, the increased exposure of candidates

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<sup>52</sup>James Latimer, "Godwin vs. Howell.", Richmond Times Dispatch, October 28, 1973, Sec. F, p. 1.

and the increased media coverage of the more prominent elections (Presidential, Senatorial, etc.) may well cause the type of election to be a factor.

A great variety of numbers and percentages have been presented in this chapter in an attempt to evaluate the relationship between SES and voting behavior in Richmond, Virginia. The next chapter, Conclusions, will summarize the findings and present the answers to the questions posed in Chapter II.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

Voting behavior theory is dominated by two major schools of thought: the Sociological school and the Psychological school. The Sociological school emphasizes the role of socio-economic status, while the Psychological school emphasizes the role of the individual mind. The question under study here was the role, if any, of socio-economic status (the Sociological school) in determining voting behavior in Richmond, Virginia.

Four variables, or components of SES, were extracted from previous studies for examination. They were: income, education, occupation, and race. The only real support for income came at the extreme upper and lower ends of the income scale. With regards to education, only at the college level did any real strength appear. Occupation yielded a somewhat weak relationship with respect to blue collar workers, but a rather strong relationship with respect to white collar workers. Race, on the other hand, turned out to be by far the dominant of the four variables examined. The findings clearly point to a strong relationship between leftist voting and being black. While there may not be a class basis for politics in Richmond, there most certainly is a racial one. The above summarized findings suggest little support for the Sociological school in Richmond, Virginia. Indeed, on the surface, the data presented in Chapter III does seem to point in that direction. There



are several factors, however, which must be acknowledged.

First of all, union control of blue collar workers in Richmond is somewhat weak. This lack of tight control may well have contributed to the low correlation coefficients found for blue collar workers. Secondly, there is a noted absence of a great variety of ethnic and religious groups in Richmond. Perhaps our sample is not broad enough to adequately evaluate this relationship. Finally, one must note that historically race has been used in the South to weaken traditional class associations. Racial prejudice has set the Negro apart from the rest of the population. Poor, uneducated blacks had little in common with poor, uneducated whites, in terms of their political associations or appeals of candidates. There simply was no cohesion among these two groups. Therefore, traditional class identities are weakened.

All totalled, these three factors may tend to blur the socio-economic cleavages espoused by the Sociological School. The absence of strong SES correlation coefficients may be due, not to their absence, but rather to the aforementioned dampening factors.

For the candidates and public officials of the area, these results have tremendous meaning. Leftist voting and race are strongly associated. Therefore, in any election, the leftist most candidate will carry the City of Richmond. With the high

black population in the city, a staunch conservative candidate stands very little chance of receiving many votes. Likewise, no public official can hope to remain in office unless he or she supports policies which are leftist in nature.

When this project was started, this author believed firmly that one's voting behavior was directly related to his or her socio-economic status. This study has shown, quite clearly I think, that in Richmond, Virginia, race and not SES is the important factor. Furthermore, this study has shown the need for and relevance of other approaches. The Psychological School has many ideas which need to be explored. Finally, this study has revealed the limitations of using aggregate data. Many explanations of the findings here could only be speculated upon because of the absence of survey data. Any further study of voting behavior in Richmond should include both the Sociological School and the Psychological School. Also it should incorporate both aggregate and survey data.

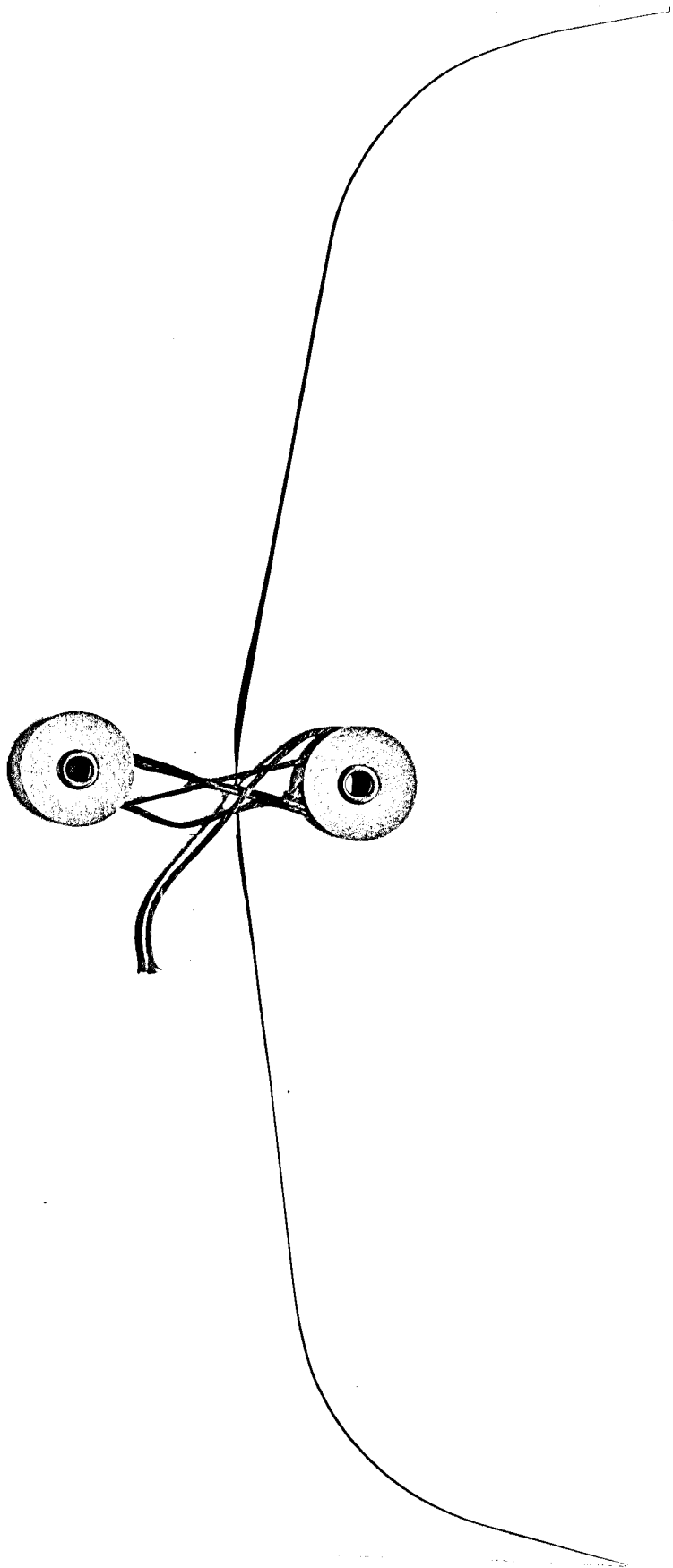
## APPENDIX

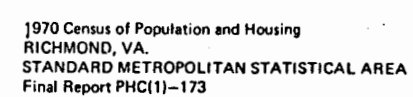
- A. Census Tracts in the Richmond, Virginia SMSA, 1970.
- B. Voting Precincts - City of Richmond, Virginia, April, 1971.

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AMENDMENTS	
Ordinance	Date
71-62-61	4-13-71
72-32-53	2-28-72
72-33-54	2-28-72
72-176-184	3-28-72
72-195-202	8-24-72

VOTING PRECINCTS  
CITY OF  
RICHMOND  
VIRGINIA  
AND  
ENVIRONS

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
BUREAU OF ENGINEERING

APRIL 1971

Amended 4 April 13, 1971  
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